

Virginia Herpetological Society

5608 Parkland Court, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

Newsletter



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EDITORS COMMENT:

Hello...Is anyone out there? I know, it is Summer time, you're in the field working with your breeding stock or doing that vacation thing. Well, I'm still here pounding away at the typewriter and putting together the first issue of our second year for the Newsletter and just wondering what you think so far.

Even with the articles, cartoons and other materials that some members have sent in, putting these pages together is no picnic. Yes, it was my idea and yes, I did volunteer for this job...but, I could sure use some feedback from you folks so I can see if the Newsletter is offering you what you would want from it. Please drop me a line or two about your thoughts and suggestions. I'm beginning to feel like the Maytag repairman!

In case you've forgotten, the address is: VHS Newsletter, P.O. Box 727, Brookneal, VA 24528.

For those of you working in any captive breeding programs, please share your successes and/or failures, (we can all learn from those too), with the rest of us. Go ahead, brag a little!

A special thanks to all of you that sent your good thoughts my way after my surgery and auto accident. I am recovering from both and looking forward to our Fall meeting and being with everyone again.

Speaking of the VHS Fall meeting, please do try to attend. One thing that I have noticed since joining the VHS myself, is the lack of participation at our two meetings each year. This should be a good one coming up too! We will meet at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, (date to be announced in your next issue of *Catesbeiana*). The Blue Ridge Herpetological Society will join the VHS at this meeting to offer herp exhibits and an educational program for the public. There will also be a raffle during this meeting to benefit the general fund of the VHS. Anyone wishing to donate raffle items should contact Joe Mitchell or myself.

HERP HAPPENINGS:

* JOINT SSAR-HL MEETING, SYMPOSIUM to honor Roger Conant: 6-11 August, 1991 at Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802; Dr. Linda Maxson, Chair.

* 1991 NATIONAL REPTILE BREEDER'S EXPO: 16-18 August, 1991. Sponsored by the Central Florida Herp. Society. To register send \$10.00 to: CFHS, P.O. Box 3277, Winter Haven, FL 33881. For hotel reservations: Twin Towers Hotel; 1-800-THE-TOWERS/or (407) 351-1000. \$65.00 single/\$75.00 double.

* SOCIETAS EUROPAEA HERPETOLOGICA MEETING: 19-23 August, 1991, Budapest. Contact Dr. Z. Korsos, Hungarian Natural History Museum H-1088, Budapest, Barossu. 13, Hungary.

* EASTERN HERP SWAP MEET & FLEA MARKET: 31 August, 1991. Write to G. Leonard Knapp, 215 Lawn Ave., Sellersville, PA 18960.

* 7th ANNUAL MIDWEST HERP CONFERENCE: 11-13 October, 1991, Indianapolis. Hosted by Hoosier Herp. Society, P.O. Box 40544, Indianapolis, IN 46240-0544.

* VHS FALL MEETING: 5 October, 1991 at Liberty Univ., Lynchburg, VA. Contact: Paul Sattler at (804)-582-2209.

* TIMBER RATTLESNAKE: CONSERVATION & PROTECTION SEMINAR: 7 December, 1991, western Massachusetts. Send S.A.S.E. to Rattlesnake Symposium, Conservation Dept., Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773.

* THE HIGHLANDS CONFERENCE on PLETHODONTID SALAMANDERS: June, 1992, Highlands, NC. Contact: Dr. R. Jaeger, Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LA 70504; (318)-231-5235.

* SECOND WORLD CONGRESS of HERPETOLOGY: 29 Dec., 1993 - 5 Jan., 1994, Hosted by the University of Adelaide. Contact: Dr. M.J. Tyler, University of Adelaide, Dept. of Zoology, Box 498, GPO, Adelaide, South Australia 5001, Australia.

THE SOCIETY COLUMN:

We've had no word at all from our sister societies except the BRHS. Come on other groups, stay in touch with us about your activities, membership information, projects and whatever! If you don't have someone within your group that will report your news to us, it just won't get printed.

The **BLUE RIDGE HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY** is staying busy as always. A committee was formed to make all plans for the society's second year of exhibiting in Lynchburg's "Day-In-The-Park". This year, besides the herp exhibits and members on hand to "talk herps" with the public, they will hold Turtle Races throughout the day. Prizes will be awarded to the children with the winning turtles. All children participating will receive a remembrance of this event from the society. Prizes will be donated by local merchants and society members. Teresa Winston volunteered to coordinate the society's "Adopt-A-Highway" project. The members present at the July meeting and those by proxy, voted all of the officers in for another one-year term. They are: Doug Eggleston/Pres., Jeff Srsic/V.P., Matt Albers/Sect. & Brandon Marshall/Tres.; Good Luck to all of these folks. Two days in the field have already been enjoyed by members and a number of other similar trips are in the works before the herping season ends for '91. The BRHS will sponsor the exhibiting of herps and an educational program for the public at the VHS Fall meeting in Lynchburg. For more information or to join, write to the BRHS, P.O. Box 727, Brookneal, VA 24528.

CAPTIVE CORNER:

Temperature Regulation in the Vivarium

By: Bruce Grant

Most herps require a range of temperature in the vivarium which allows them to regulate their body temperature. One end of the vivarium is "hot", the other cool. By moving between the two extremes, a reptile is able to control its desired body temperature.

It is important to know the animal's temperature range in its natural environment if we are to simulate it in captivity. I suggest researching this through available literature. If this proves unfruitful, I suggest going to a library and selecting a travel guide such as **Foder's Travel Guides**. These guides give the reader the average day and night temperature, humidity, and days of rain for a particular area. By reading this data for the reptile's home environment, we can learn much.

Once the range has been established, it is possible to use commercially available products to set up a heating and lighting system which successfully mimics the temperatures in the animal's environment.

Some of my lizards need nighttime temperatures of approximately 70-80 °F. Therefore, the heating system must keep the vivarium from dropping below this level. During the day, one end of the cage is heated so that it reaches the upper end of the animal's desired daytime temperature range. For my lizards, this is approximately 95-105 °F. The "cold" end of the cage

reaches 80-85 °F during the day from warmth from the "hot" end.

I use a combination of incandescent bulbs and Rena Cor brand heating cables. The hot end of the cage has two 150 watt bulbs. A regular bulb heats the whole end of the cage. In addition, a 150 watt reflector spot light is used to focus a beam of hot light onto a branch for a basking site. This is also called a "hot spot" and can quickly warm the reptile. Make sure your light fixtures can accommodate high wattage bulbs. Some can't.

Under the entire floor of the vivarium is a buried waterproof Rena Cor brand cable. This produces a low, constant source of "background" heat for the entire vivarium. This background heat keeps the cage a toasty 70 °F at night. These heating cables are available at some plant nurseries or herp dealers, or you can call Rena at 1-800-822-RENA. They come in a variety of sizes and watts. Unfortunately, a thermostat for the cable is not currently available in the U.S., although the product does exist and is available from Rena in France. * * EDITORS NOTE: Rena is currently re-designing their thermostat and hope to have one commercially available in the U.S. by the end of '91. Prices for their product line may vary from dealer to dealer. They do not sell direct, but are happy to refer any caller to their nearest dealer. * * I circumvented the problem by purchasing a "plug-in" style lamp dimmer and plugging the cable into it. The dimmer allows me to adjust the cable's heat and costs about \$12.00.

If you are not using a substrate, you can still use the heating cable system. Cut a piece of plywood to exactly fit the cage's floor. Then "jack" the false floor up several inches using wooden blocks or similar. It will heat the floor nicely.

I use timers on the lights, (incandescent and full-spectrum grow lights), which cut off the lights one by one. This avoids plunging your animal into total darkness and also simulates dusk, which is an important time of day for some herps. The above system has worked well for me. I hope it does for you too.

The **Herper's Marketplace:**

- The BJ Pinkie Pump •
- 5 sizes-surgical stainless steel- sexing probes •
- 3 sizes-black, ABS plastic-hide boxes •
- 2 sizes-The BJ "Hot Feeders" •
- Telescopic snake hook w/pocket clip •
- Herp ID/INFO cards •
- Books, collectibles, novelties & MORE. •

Send S.A.S.E. (45c postage) for list to: **BACK COUNTRY HERPS**
P.O. Box 727
Brookneal, Va. 24528

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

* VHS President, Joe Mitchel reported that \$925.00 has been donated for the VHS "Poster" at the Spring meeting. Joe does not have the time to concentrate the soliciting of donations, writing proposals, etc., for this project all by himself. He has requested assistance from all VHS members to help make this worthwhile project a reality. Please contact Joe with your donations or to offer your help.

* It's sad to have to report this, but true - your VHS membership dues will increase as of January, 1992! Due to the costs of printing this newsletter and **Catesbelana** and the increase in postal rates, the members attending the Spring meeting voted to increase all VHS dues as follows: Regular membership -\$10.00, Student membership (those under 18 years of age) -\$6.00 and Family membership -\$12.50. The Life membership rate will remain at \$150.00. All dues are on an annual basis.

* The well is running dry again! I need submissions from ALL of our members for publication in these pages. Send me your article, Herpful Hints, Cartoons, puzzles & mazes, book reviews or whatever you may be able to submit for publication. I do request that any materials submitted that has been printed in any other publication, come with some form of written permission to use all or part of the material for our newsletter. **Please**, send your material to me soon. Our next newsletter is due to be printed in mid to late Oct., with a Nov. delivery date to our members.

BOOK REVIEW:

THE YEAR OF THE TURTLE: A NATURAL HISTORY

Written and Illustrated by
David M. Carroll

Camden House Publishing, Inc. - 1991

Review by
Douglas W. Eggleston

Here's one for all of you turtle lovers out there! This book combines 40 years of study, careful observations and artwork by Mr. Carroll. He has not only captured the turtles he writes about with his pen and ink, and paints, but he has captured the spirit of these creatures through his words.

Mr. Carroll's writing style offers the reader a taste of the seasons and one can feel as if you would know "The Digs" if you walked up on it today. His concern for the details of the plants, the weather, other creatures that share this habitat and the turtles he discusses, allow you to see this place in your mind's-eye. Even if this volume did not have the superb sketches and prints to illustrate it, you would see it all.

This is good reading! You don't even have to be a turtle lover to enjoy the text or the illustrations. All one must have to truly enjoy this book is an interest in the natural world.

A total of 173 pages is all he needed to give great insight to the lives of the turtles he dicusses. No minor

detail is left unmentioned. From the countryside they inhabit to the very nature of their being, Mr. Carroll reports his observations in both journal and novel styles. It is a hard book to put down once you begin it.

Regardless whether you are into turtles or not, this book is a must read! It is reasonably priced at retail for \$22.95, and I have seen it discounted already through book clubs and dealers for as little as \$18.00 a copy. If you enjoy a good herp book like I do, then you'll enjoy **THE YEAR OF THE TURTLE: A NATURAL HISTORY**, by David M. Carroll.

Mark R. Finkler, D.V.M.

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